

GRR Changes E-Mail and Web Addresses

The general e-mail address for the GRR is grrabc@abcgrr.org. Those who have offices in the GRR Resource Center:

Dwight@abcgrr.org
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Roland@abcgrr.org
Candy@abcgrr.org
Sharon@abcgrr.org
Debbie@abcgrr.org

Regional Associates - Revs. Henson, Ricks, McNeely & Johnson - **have not changed** their e-mail addresses.

The web site of the GRR is now **www.abcgrr.org**. Look familiar? It's the same address, but with the hyphen (dash) removed.

E-mail and web sites are just two of the ways that the ABC GRR challenges, empowers, assists and represents American Baptist Churches in Illinois and Missouri. This publication - **The Mainstream** - as well as meetings by appointment with church leaders and pastoral staffs, telephone conversations, mail, and even fax are tools that the GRR Staff uses in these efforts.

The web site, **www.abcgrr.org**, is a place that our churches - pastors and church members - go to find **News, Opportunities, Reflections, and Connections for Growing Healthy Churches**. It functions as an online directory, calendar, file cabinet of resources (static and interactive), video library (interviews, sermons, and workshops), platform for just-in-time learning, and event registration tool. Try it out. Be one of the 2,500 who will use it this month.

Our Great Rivers Region Family Is Growing!

First Baptist Church, Greenville, IL Welcomes: Tyler Sharp, Robert (Tom) Leihser, Brenda Leihser, Kimberly Bone, Jeffrey Boland, Christine Boland, Joseph Boland, and Michael Boland

First Baptist Church, Jerseyville, IL Welcomes: Gordon Wilson Beverly Wilson, and Trent Mizulski

New Vision Baptist Church of the Living God, Kansas City, MO Welcomes: Kim Richardson, Kenneth Murray, and Jaedren Murray

Warder Street Baptist Church, Marion, IL Welcomes: Robert Cox and Homer Robinson

Elliott Avenue Baptist Church, Springfield, IL Welcomes: Dawna Stone, Cassidy Haynes, LaMarco Donald, LaDarius Donald, Selena Harris, Shadow Cook, Nate Williamson and Linda Williamson

Mainstream Contact Information

Send your stories of mission and ministry. Please also send the names of new members (fruit of this mission and ministry) to:

Linda Ricks
232 Devron Circle
East Peoria, IL 61611

E-Mail: Ricks4Lr@comcast.net



The Mainstream

News of Ministry and Mission

American Baptist Churches of the Great Rivers Region

December 2008

Email: grrabc@abcgrr.org

web: www.abcgrr.org

GRR Calendar

2009 Theme - Plant the Harvest

January

16 - 19 - SKWIM at Green Lake

March

14 - Area V Annual Meeting,
FBC Edwardsville IL

15 - Area II Annual Meeting
Jacksonville FBC

21 - Area IV Annual Meeting
First Baptist Church, Benton IL

22 - Area I Annual Meeting
First Baptist Church, Ottawa IL

22 - Area III Annual Meeting
North Bridge Baptist Church
Normal, IL

April

17 - 18 - Clergy Spouse Retreat
Lake Springfield Camp

24 - 25 - GRR Missions Conference
Cherry Hills Baptist
Church, Springfield, IL

May

28 - Church for All Generations
with Edward H. Hammett
FBC Bloomington, IL



Merry Christmas

From the

Great Rivers Region Staff

Dwight Stinnett

John Grisham

Cheryl Henson

Richard Ricks

Randy McNeely

Muriel Johnson

Candy Stivers

Sharon Downs

Debbie Naugle

Roland Sundberg

Mike Henson

Linda Ricks

Carl Cottingham

Wayne Rogers



News From Our Executive Minister

“Open your eyes and look at the fields...they are ripe

for harvest!” (John 4:35) This biblical challenge provided the basis for the theme of “Harvest Time” at the annual meeting of Great Rivers Region churches in October. It also will provide the focus for regional emphasis in 2009.

Each of the GRR Areas will explore the theme in their own unique way through their Area meetings in February and March. The GRR Mission Conference (April 24-25) will challenge us with “Harvest Time: Here, There and Everywhere.” For the first time, the GRR Mission Conference will include a track exclusively for young adults. This event is being designed by our own eXtreme Team veterans. Finally, there will be a special GRR workshop with Dr. Eddie Hammett to help churches “Reach People Under 40 While Keeping People Over 60.” The workshop (May 28), for both pastors and lay leaders, will not only highlight one of the key challenges churches face today, it will provide practical suggestions for success in this crucial “field.” The DesPeres Legacy makes the Hammett workshop possible.

In addition to these events, there will be two regional resources to challenge, assist and empower churches in their harvest work.

In 2008 we offered an experimental Intern Grant Program. It was a great success, with nearly a dozen churches taking advantage of matching grants to do something new.

Thanks to the DesPeres Legacy, these grants will be continued in 2008 with some modifications. While the funds are limited, these grants will make it possible for churches to try something they have never done before.

Harvest Grants is another matching grant program. These grants can be used by GRR churches for just about any evangelistic effort during 2009. The operational definition of an **“evangelistic effort” is any program, activity, or event directed to those outside the church and including an intentional invitation to Christian discipleship.**

These special GRR events and services are intended to challenge, empower and assist churches to “open their eyes and look at the fields.”

I cannot enjoy the harvest of fresh fruits and vegetables by staying in the barn and polishing the equipment; or reading a farm magazine; or watching a video of an extraordinary harvest in another place. I can only harvest by working hard to prepare the soil, choosing and planting good seed, tending to growing plants, and only then, the harvest. I must look to my own field.

The same is true of churches. What “field” has God given you?

Dwight Stinnett



Note: To get a Harvest Grant packet, including application, call the GRR or download it from http://www.abcgrr.org/evangelism/Harvest_Grants_2009.pdf

2009 Camping Season Schedule Available

Looking for a way to support camping in your church? Here are some ideas.

- > Give your church a full or partial scholarship as a Christmas gift to help the church send another camper from the community to camp.
- > Start praying and recruiting children and youth from your community and church to go to camp this coming summer.
- > Put a Camping Sunday on your church calendar. Invite an alumnus or camp manager to say a word or two, perhaps show a video.
- > Invite one of those who went to camp last year to talk about her / his experience.

For more information, including dates of camps: www.abcgrr.org/grrcamps/index.htm

A Chance Encounter

One week a month, the senior ladies and Charlie at Bethel Neighborhood Center make pillows for Cancer Action clients and empathy dolls for patients at Children’s Mercy Hospital. We needed more unbleached muslin for the empathy dolls so, on a Saturday afternoon, I went to the Hancock Fabric Store to buy a bolt of material. With very few customers in the store, the clerk asked me what I would be doing with so much material. I explained that the muslin would be used

to make dolls for the children at Children’s Mercy Hospital.

Immediately, a lady who had walked up behind me began to almost shout, “Oh, thank you! Thank you! My three year old shut a door on her finger this week. We rushed her to Children’s Mercy. They gave her a doll and she loved it. Now she sleeps with it every night. Don’t ever stop making those dolls.”

The clerk was amazed and mentioned how ironic it was for both of us to be at her register at the same time. The lady said, it is even more strange. I live in southern Johnson County, but was in the area for the Apple Fest and stopped at this store on my way home. Once again God winks!

Elaine Mills

*Taken from “Around & About”
FBC Kansas City, MO*

GREAT RIVERS REGIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

There are scholarship programs in the Great Rivers Region to assist young people who are members of Great Rivers Region American Baptist Churches to help with college and/or seminary education costs.

Scholarships for any college student (regardless of major) or seminary student are available from the Gernenz-Shurtleff / Wilcoxen Scholarship.

Ministerial students attending ABC-related schools and seminaries in preparation for ministry can also apply for the Harold O. Long Scholarship. **All applications must be received in the GRR office by April 1, 2009.**

To receive an application for these scholarships, write to: Scholarship Committee, Att: Sharon Downs, PO Box 3786, Springfield, IL 62708, or email Sharon@abcgrr.org